

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. – 4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) An ammunition loading assembly for loading a projectile into a barrel of a gun, the loading assembly comprising:

an urging member for urging the projectile into the barrel of the gun,

drive means for driving the urging member between a projectile receiving position outside the barrel and a projectile delivery position inside a chamber of the gun, towards the proximate end of the barrel, the drive means including a drive chain assembly, connected to the urging member for driving the urging member between the projectile receiving and delivery positions,

a magazine for storing the drive chain assembly when the urging member is in the projectile receiving position,

a first chain-retaining device for limiting curving of the chain assembly out of its linear orientation, when moving the urging member towards the projectile delivery position, the first chain-retaining device being movable with the urging member from the projectile receiving position towards a position intermediate the projectile receiving and delivery positions, where the first chain-retaining device is retained from further

movement by a retaining means, and

~~a magazine for storing the drive chain assembly~~, the magazine including a polymeric body of polypropylene defining a curvilinear track along which the drive chain assembly moves when moving the urging member between the projectile delivery position and the projectile receiving position, the magazine being covered by metal cover plates defining an outlet for the chain assembly and being provided with metal reinforcing members having curved chain guiding faces located at corners of the track, for guiding the inner end of the drive chain assembly around such corners.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) An ammunition loading assembly according to claim ~~1~~²⁴ wherein the drive chain assembly is constituted of a plurality of chain links pivotally connected to each other; and wherein each chain link is provided with a retaining block, each retaining block comprising a base for connecting to a chain link and two abutment faces extending upwardly from the base, the angle between the base and each abutment face being marginally greater than 90 degrees, so that each retaining block abuts the retaining block of a consecutive chain link to make the drive chain assembly rigid in all directions but one, such that when the drive chain assembly is bent in the one direction, the retaining blocks are displaced from each other, and when the drive chain assembly is

in a linear configuration, adjacent retaining blocks abut each other to limit bending of the drive chain assembly in all but said one direction, the retaining blocks being configured so that, when the blocks abut each other, the drive chain assembly extends in a loose curve, and when the curve is straightened the drive chain assembly is stressed.

9. – 12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously presented) An ammunition loading assembly for loading a projectile into a barrel of a gun, the loading assembly comprising:

an urging member for urging the projectile into the barrel of the gun,

drive means for driving the urging member between a projectile receiving position outside the barrel and a projectile delivery position inside a chamber of the gun, towards the proximate end of the barrel, the drive means including a drive chain assembly, connected to the urging member for driving the urging member between the projectile receiving and delivery positions,

a magazine for storing the drive chain assembly when the urging member is in the projectile receiving position, and

a first chain-retaining device for limiting curving of the chain assembly out of its linear orientation, when moving the urging member towards the projectile delivery position, the first chain-retaining device being movable with the urging member from the projectile receiving position towards a position intermediate the projectile receiving and

delivery positions, where the first chain-retaining device is retained from further movement.

14. (Currently Amended) An ammunition loading assembly for loading a projectile into a barrel of a gun, the loading assembly comprising:

an urging member for urging the projectile into the barrel of the gun,

drive means for driving the urging member between a projectile receiving position outside the barrel and a projectile delivery position inside a chamber of the gun, towards the proximate end of the barrel, the drive means including a drive chain assembly, connected to the urging member for driving the urging member between the projectile receiving and delivery positions,

a magazine for storing the drive chain assembly when the urging member is in the projectile receiving position,

a first chain-retaining device for limiting curving of the chain assembly out of its linear orientation, when moving the urging member towards the projectile delivery position, the first chain-retaining device being movable with the urging member from the projectile receiving position towards a position intermediate the projectile receiving and delivery positions, where the first chain-retaining device is retained from further movement by a retaining means, and

a second chain-retaining device, for guiding the chain when moving out of the magazine.

15. (Previously Presented) An ammunition loading assembly according to claim 14 wherein the drive chain assembly is comprised of a plurality of chain links pivotally connected to each other, and wherein each chain link is provided with a retaining block for abutting the retaining block of a consecutive chain link for rigidising the drive chain assembly in all directions but one, and wherein the first and second chain-retaining devices are each provided with at least one sliding member for engaging an upper surface of the retaining blocks of the chain assembly.

16. (Original) An ammunition loading assembly according to claim 15, wherein the sliding members each comprises one or more polypropylene bodies.

17. (Previously Presented) An ammunition loading assembly according to claim 14, wherein the second chain-retaining device is movable with the urging member in a direction towards the projectile delivery position, from a position proximate the outlet of the magazine to a position offset from the said outlet.

18. (Currently Amended) A gun including an ammunition loading assembly according to claim ~~14~~24.

19. (Withdrawn) A drive chain assembly for an ammunition loading assembly for loading a projectile into a barrel of a gun, the chain assembly comprising a plurality of chain links pivotally connected to each other; each chain link being provided with a retaining block for abutting the retaining block of a consecutive chain link for rigidising the drive chain assembly in all directions but one.

20. (Withdrawn) A drive chain assembly according to claim 19 wherein the arrangement is such that when the drive chain assembly is bent in the said one direction, the retaining blocks are displaced from each other, and when the drive chain assembly is in a linear configuration, adjacent retaining blocks abut each other to limit bending of the drive chain assembly in all but said one direction.

21. (Withdrawn) A drive chain assembly according to claim 20 wherein the configuration of the retaining blocks is such that, when the blocks abut each other, the drive chain assembly extends in a loose curve, the arrangement being further such that the drive chain assembly is stressed by straightening the curve.

22. (Withdrawn) A drive chain assembly according to claim 21 wherein the retaining blocks each comprises a base for connecting to a chain link and two abutment faces extending upwardly from the base, the configuration being such that the angle between the base and each abutment face is marginally greater than 90 degrees.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) An ammunition loading assembly according to claim 1 ~~for loading a projectile into a barrel of a gun, comprising:~~

an urging member for urging the projectile into the barrel; and

drive means for driving the urging member between a projectile receiving position outside the barrel and a projectile delivery position inside a chamber of the gun, proximate to the end of the barrel, so that the projectile is delivered into the proximate end of the barrel where the urging member stops and the projectile is released by the urging member so that the projectile engraves on rifling in the barrel under its own momentum,

the drive means including a drive chain assembly connected to the urging member for driving the urging member between the projectile receiving and delivery positions,
and

which includes a first chain-retaining device for limiting curving of the chain assembly out of its linear orientation, when moving the urging member towards the projectile delivery position, the first chain-retaining device being movable with the urging member from the projectile receiving position towards a position intermediate the projectile receiving and delivery positions, where it is retained from further movement.

25. (Currently Amended) An ammunition loading assembly for loading a projectile into a barrel of a gun, the loading assembly comprising

an urging member for urging the projectile into the barrel;

drive means for driving the urging member between a projectile receiving position outside the barrel and a projectile delivery position inside a chamber of the gun, proximate to the end of the barrel, so that the projectile is delivered into the proximate end of the barrel where the urging member stops and the projectile is released by the urging member so that the projectile engraves on rifling in the barrel under its own momentum,

the drive means including a drive chain assembly connected to the urging member for driving the urging member between the projectile receiving and delivery positions,

a first chain-retaining device for limiting curving of the chain assembly out of its linear orientation, when moving the urging member towards the projectile delivery position, the first chain-retaining device being movable with the urging member from the projectile receiving position towards a position intermediate the projectile receiving and delivery positions, where it is retained from further movement by a retaining means, and

a second chain-retaining device, for guiding the chain when moving out of the magazine.

26. (Previously Presented) An ammunition loading assembly according to claim 25 wherein the drive chain assembly is comprised of a plurality of chain links

pivotaly connected to each other, and wherein each chain link is provided with a retaining block for abutting the retaining block of a consecutive chain link for rigidising the drive chain assembly in all directions but one, and wherein the first and second chain-retaining devices are each be provided with at least one sliding member for engaging an upper surface of the retaining blocks of the chain assembly.

27. (Previously Presented) An ammunition loading assembly according to claim 26 wherein the sliding members each comprises one or more polypropylene bodies.

28. (Previously Presented) An ammunition loading assembly according to claim 25 wherein the second chain-retaining device is movable with the urging member in a direction towards the projectile delivery position, from a position proximate the outlet of the magazine to a position offset from the said outlet.